Complete Communities

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SETTLEMENT ROLE AND HIERARCHY STUDY

Final Report: Executive Summary

Troy Planning + Design
November 2020

Southend Borough Council

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Settlement Role and Hierarchy Study

On behalf of:

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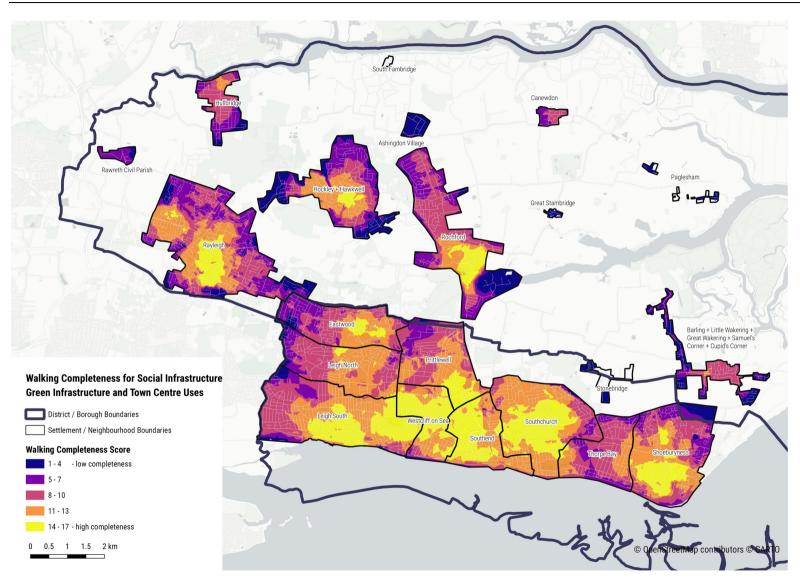
Executive Summary

Purpose of the study

This report presents recommendations as to the settlement role and hierarchy across Rochford District and Southend Borough. It will be used to help inform decisions in the new Local Plans for both authorities, particularly around potential directions of growth and intensification. The study assesses the network of towns and smaller settlements in Rochford but, in Southend, rather than treating the urban area as one, breaks this down into a series of neighbourhoods.

Approach to assessing 'completeness'

The study has taken an approach to assessing the 'completeness' of settlements and neighbourhoods. It maps the provision of services and facilities, and accessibility to these, and suggests that where there is good provision and accessibility, then a place is more 'complete'. This reflects emerging thinking in cities across the world which are embedding concepts such as the 'twenty-minute neighbourhood' into their planning strategies for the future. Such a concept implies that the services and facilities you need for everyday life should be no more than a ten minute journey from your home, and ten minutes back (a twenty minute return journey). The emphasis is on walking and cycling, supported by an efficient public transport network. This has been reflected in this study through the calculation and mapping of walking catchment distances around facilities.

The assessment has taken place at three levels. First, the provision of day-to-day facilities and walking catchment areas around these has been mapped. This includes, for example, primary schools, local parks and shops. Heat-mapping of this assessment, in ES Figure a, overlays the catchments of different facilities. Where multiple catchments overlap these are the hotter or most complete areas, benefiting from provision of and access to a greater number of day-to-day facilities. This is supported by a summary, in ES Table a, showing how much of each settlement or neighbourhood is within the walking catchment of different services and facilities.

Second, the public transport network has been mapped, with catchment areas around train stations and frequent bus routes indicated. Third, those facilities of a city or region wide importance, such as hospitals, universities and cultural venues, have been mapped alongside their proximity to public transport.

ES Figure a: Heat mapping of completeness based on everyday services for all settlements and neighbourhoods within the study area

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Place	Education	Health	Civic	Sport & Leisure	Green Infrastructure	Town Centre Uses	Aggregated Completeness Score
	% of each place within walking catchment of everyday services						
Rochford District							
Canewdon	33	0	48	100	55	14	42
Gt. Stambridge	0	0	21	0	0	0	4
Gt. Wakering	41	22	48	82	3	10	34
Hockley	42	60	37	60	26	26	42
Hullbridge	22	61	77	57	5	14	40
Paglesham	0	0	6	0	4	0	2
Rawreth	31	0	41	71	23	24	32
Rayleigh	60	56	38	70	18	48	48
Rochford	46	56	45	59	8	44	45
South Fambridge	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Stonebridge	6	0	0	0	0	9	3
Southend Borough							
Southend urban area	73	77	50	69	21	57	58
Eastwood	54	74	38	63	23	49	50
Leigh (entire area)	73	80	48	69	24	50	57
Leigh (north)	70	68	34	78	23	50	54
Leigh (south)	75	87	57	63	24	50	59
Prittlewell	77	51	41	86	18	62	56
Shoeburyness	59	66	46	80	24	46	53
Southchurch	86	86	54	78	23	68	66
Southend (central)	86	90	78	51	18	82	68
Thorpe Bay	71	91	33	28	13	45	47
Westcliff-on-Sea	88	84	82	69	18	75	70

ES Table a: Completeness score of all settlements and neighbourhoods for everyday services

Colour coding indicates level of completeness:

Higher levels of completeness: >75%	*Mid-high levels of completeness: 51-75%*	*Mid-low levels of completeness: 26-50%*	*Lower levels of completeness: Up to 25%*

The report presents a summary profile for each settlement and neighbourhood assessed, with more detailed profiles presented in free-standing reports available alongside this. For comparison purposes, ES Table b shows the completeness of each settlement broken down by provision of and access to everyday services. A series of separate 'rainbow charts' for settlements in Rochford and neighbourhoods in Southend are presented in ES Figure b and ES Figure c respectively. Given the population and area covered by the Leigh neighbourhood in Southend it has been split into 'Leigh (north)' and 'Leigh (south)', though the report considers Leigh as a whole as well as the further subdivision of the neighbourhood.

The assessment indicates that, at the day-to-day level:

- High degrees of completeness are found in central areas, where services and facilities are typically concentrated. These areas include Southend (central), Westclifff-on-Sea, parts of Prittlewell and Leigh. This central area scores well across all infrastructure types, with the exception of green infrastructure. Soutchurch and Shoeburyness also rank as having a high completeness score, though with variation. Thorpe Bay, parts of Prittlewell and Eastwood are ranked as being less complete.

- As a whole, the Southend urban area and its constituent neighbourhoods are more complete than settlements within Rochford District. However, Southend as a whole scores relatively low in respect of green infrastructure and access to this. This reflects the highly urbanised nature of Southend, particularly in relation to settlements in Rochford District. In reality, many areas benefit from access to the waterfront, though further away from this, physical infrastructure, including main roads and railway lines, act as barriers to movement and thus access to the waterfront as an amenity.

- Within Rochford District the most complete areas are the centres of Rayleigh, Rochford and Hockley. Towards the edges of these towns the completeness score drops.

- Great Wakering, Hullbridge and Canewdon sit below Rayleigh, Rochford and Hockley in terms of population. They have mid-levels of completeness, though benefit from good provision of some day-to-day services and facilities, including sports, leisure and civic uses.

- The outlying towns and villages have mid-to low completeness scores, with Paglesham, South Fambridge and Great Stambridge all achieving very low scores, meaning there is a lack of day-to-day facilities within these areas for the local community. Stonebridge, which straddles the administrative boundary between Rochford District and Southend Borough, also has very low levels of completeness, despite its proximity to the main urban area of Southend.

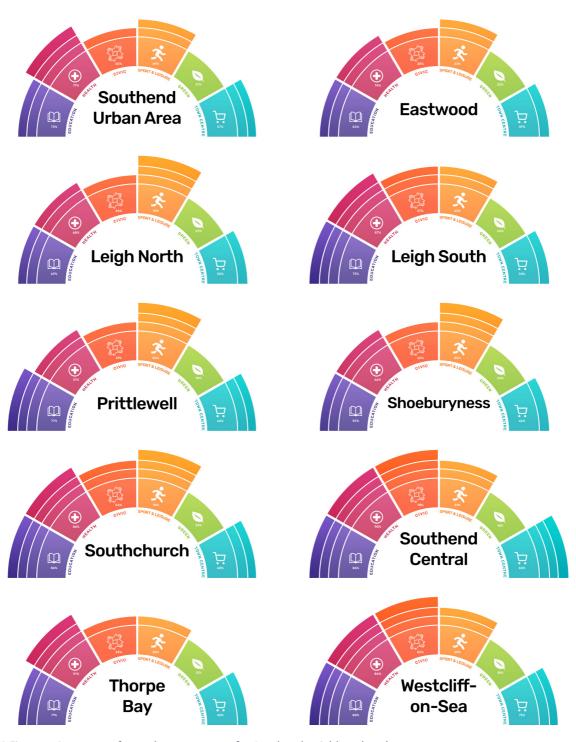## Completeness scores for day-to-day services and facilities

ES Table b: Completeness scores for day-to-day services and facilities for all settlements (including total combined completeness for Southend urban area)

ES Figure b: Summary of completeness scores for Rochford settlements

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ES Figure c: Summary of completeness scores for Southend neighbourhoods

Settlement hierarchy

The layering approach followed in this study recognises that those services and facilities needed for day-to-day life should ideally be provided close to home, but that, because of economies of scale, provision of facilities of city or region-wide importance will be more limited, and people will be willing to travel further to use such facilities.

This approach has helped to inform those settlements that perform well at the neighbourhood level, for day-to-day purposes, but also which are of a higher-order in the settlement hierarchy because of the role they play in terms of wider regional services and facilities.

This assessment has been considered against socio-demographic factors to determine whether there is any correlation between the provision (or not) of services, population densities, housing mix and type, and Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD).

The study concludes by recommending a settlement hierarchy for Southend and Rochford, suggesting what this might mean for future growth. Wider recommendations for consideration in the new Local Plans are also presented that might help the respective authorities plan for positive change across the study area.

A settlement hierarchy for Southend

The suggested settlement hierarchy in Southend is based upon the consideration of individual neighbourhoods across the urban area and the potential for change within these. The suggested hierarchy of places in Southend is:

Tier 1:   Southend (central)

Tier 2:   Leigh (entire neighbourhood)

Tier 3:   Prittlewell, Southchurch, Westcliff-on-Sea,

Tier 4:   Eastwood, Shoeburyness, Thorpe Bay

The study recognises that Leigh is a large area, both in terms of population and geography, and that the provision of facilities and thus completeness varies across this. It explores a potential sub-division into Leigh (north) and Leigh (south). Both remain relatively complete, particularly in comparison to other places across the study area. Should the neighbourhood be sub-divided, then it is recommended that Leigh (south) fall within Tier 2 and Leigh (north) in Tier 3.

A settlement hierarchy for Rochford

The separate settlement hierarchy for Rochford is:

Tier 1:   Rayleigh

Tier 2:   Hockley and Rochford

Tier 3:   Canewdon, Great Wakering and Hullbridge

Tier 4:   Great Stambridge, Paglesham, Rawreth, South Fambridge,
Stonebridge

A combined settlement hierarchy

A combined settlement hierarchy is also presented, with Southend represented as the entire urban area (as opposed to individual neighbourhoods) and which comprises the primary settlement in the study area, below which other tiers reflect the Rochford settlement hierarchy. The combined settlement hierarchy suggested in the study is:

Tier 1:   Southend

Tier 2:   Rayleigh

Tier 3:   Hockley, Rochford

Tier 4:   Canewdon, Great Wakering, Hullbridge

Tier 5:   Great Stambridge, Paglesham, Rawreth, South Fambridge,
Stonebridge